West-Riding of Yorkshire.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONSTABLES.

YOU are the immediate and proper officers to Juſtices of the Peace; and, as ſuch, are bound to execute, with readineſs and diſpatch, all warrants, ſummonſes, and precepts, directed to you from the Magiſtrates; or, by their order, from the High Conſtable of your diſtrict.

The moſt eſſential part of your duty is, a general ſuperintendence over the peace and good order of your diſtrict. Your powers for this purpoſe are great and extenſive, and your duty is compulſory. On any breach of the peace in your preſence, you are bound by your oath to interpoſe, and you are ſeverely puniſhable for omiſſion. You are not only empowered (as all private perſons are) to part an affray which happens in your preſence, but you are, at your peril, to uſe your beſt endeavours for that purpoſe. Where any perſon ſhall threaten to kill, beat, or hurt another, or ſhall evidently *be ready* to break the peace, it is your duty to interpoſe; and if the offender perſiſt, you may carry him before a Magiſtrate, to find ſureties of the peace.

You are to ſuppreſs all riots; and (which is much better) prevent them. If you hear diſturbances in public-houſes, tending towards a breach of the peace, it is your duty to enter and reſtore good order.

When you are called upon for your aſſiſtance to quell, or prevent any breach of the peace, you muſt attend on the ſpot without delay, and you are puniſhable for neglect. In all ſuch caſes you ſhould firſt uſe perſuaſion and exhortation; and when you find ſuch means ineffectual, you may arreſt the offenders; and whenever you arreſt a man on your own authority, you ſhould take him, with all convenient ſpeed, before a Magiſtrate. But if, from the time of night, diſtance, or other reaſonable impediment, that cannot conveniently be done, you may keep him in ſafe cuſtody until the morning. But you muſt *particularly obſerve*, that in whatſoever caſe you may have taken a perſon into your cuſtody, you may *by no means* diſcharge him by your own authority.

You are to make *purſuit of Hue and Cry* at all times, when demanded of you, in conſequence of a felony recently committed, or of any perſon being grievouſly and dangerouſly wounded; the party aggrieved giving you a reaſonable aſſurance of the fact, and deſcribing the felo[n]. *By purſuit of Hue and Cry*, you are to [ma]ke aſſiſtance of ſuch perſons as you chuſe [to] for the felon [wi]thin your [li]berties, and you are alſo to [gi]ve immediate [in]formation to the Conſtables of the neighbouring diſtricts, with a like deſcription of the offence and the offender, that you have yourſelf received.

In the execution of your office, you are not to be intimidated by fear, or ſwayed by favor or affection. To ſupport you in your duty, the law has armed you with extenſive powers, as well for your *aſſiſtance*, as for your *indemnity and protection*. You may demand the aid and aſſiſtance of all His Majeſty's ſubjects, who, on refuſal, are puniſhable by fine and impriſonment. You are, by ſtatute, indemnified for what you do, in obedience to the warrant of a Juſtice of the Peace; and it has been determined that a perſon ought to be *committed for oppoſing a Conſtable*, though by *words only*, in the execution of his office; be careful, therefore, to obſerve ſtrictly the directions of your warrant, and keep it after the ſervice for your juſtification. Should you be aſſaulted in the execution of your office, you are, in a peculiar manner under the protection of the law, and the offence is liable to a very aggravated penalty, or corporal puniſhment.

You are not to ſuffer any common beggars or vagrants to remain within your diſtrict; but, without a warrant, to carry them before a Magiſtrate. By vagrants you are generally to underſtand—perſons wandering abroad, and begging under falſe pretences, and without certificate or paſs; perſons lodging in alehouſes, barns, and out-houſes, not giving a good account of themſelves; gipſeys, fortune-tellers, jugglers, and gameſters, or others uſing any ſubtle craft to deceive or impoſe on His Majeſty's ſubjects; venders of medicines, or other petty chapmen, or pedlars wandering abroad without being duly licenſed. Theſe you are entitled to a reward for apprehending, and if you refuſe or neglect to apprehend and convey ſuch perſons before a Magiſtrate, you are liable to a penalty. You are alſo to bring to puniſhment all *drivers of waggons, carts, &c. miſbehaving* in the ſtreets and highways, whereby the ſafety of travellers and paſſengers is ſo frequently endangered, and ſo many lives are loſt.

On reaſonable ſuſpicion you are to arreſt felons and rogues of all kinds, and carry them before a Magiſtrate. It is your duty to keep a watchful eye over ſtrangers of ſuſpicious appearance, who continue ſtrolling about within your diſtrict; if ſuch are ſeen out of their lodgings at unſeaſonable hours of the night, and refuſe to give an account of themſelves, you may détain them in cuſtody till the next morning, and carry them before a Magiſtrate; by your attention in this particular, houſe-breaking, felonies, and many other malicious practices may be prevented.

You ought frequently to inſpect the public-houſes within your diſtrict, and to ſee that the laws and orders of the Quarter Seſſions are punctually obeyed. You are bound to preſent all ſuch publicans as ſuffer gaming, tippling, (which is drinking longer, or in greater quantities, than neceſſary refreſhment requires) or any other irregularities. You are alſo to report to the Magiſtrates in their Petty Seſſion, the reſult of ſuch inſpection, and return the names of perſons found tippling or gaming at unſeaſonable hours.

If in any ſuch ſearch you find any diſorderly people who refuſe to give an account of themſelves, or have no viſible means of ſupport, you may *arreſt* them and bring them before the Magiſtrate in the morning.

You are to make diligent enquiry and ſearch, to detect perſons who ſhall uſe *ſhort weights and meaſures*, or ſell *unwholeſome proviſions*, and give due notice to the Magiſtrates concerning them, that His Majeſty's ſubjects, and eſpecially the *labouring poor*, be not thereby defrauded and injured.

It is your duty to inform the Magiſtrates of perſons keeping houſes of bad fame, ſuffering unlawful games, and ſelling ale without licenſe, or who lodge vagrants.

Pay particular attention to public-houſes on Saturday nights; many a poor man's wages are then conſumed, and his family thereby left to miſery and hunger, through the following week.

It is alſo your duty to promote a due obſervance of the Sabbath, by ſuppreſſing huckſters, and all other perſons who ſhall, contrary to the ſtatutes, exerciſe their worldly callings on the Lord's-day, and eſpecially to obſerve thoſe who reſort to public-houſes, or uſe ſports in time of divine ſervice, that they may be proceeded againſt according to law.

It is part of your duty to preſent the offence of drunkenneſs, or rather to make immediate information thereof before a Magiſtrate. And if in your hearing any perſon ſhould be guilty of profane curſing and ſwearing, if unknown, you may carry him before a Magiſtrate; if known, you ſhould make information; for on your default, you are yourſelf liable to puniſhment.

You ſhall make a due return of Jurors according to your precept; and if in your liſt you omit the name of any perſon which ought to be inſerted, or inſert any one which ought to be omitted, or ſhall take any reward for any ſuch inſertion or omiſſion, you are liable to a ſevere penalty, on conviction before One Juſtice.

Bear in your mind, that theſe are duties which you *are ſworn to perform to the beſt of your knowledge and abilities, and that by neglect thereof you incur the heinous ſin of perjury.* Conſider that you are the executive officer of juſtice, and the conſervator of the peace; and that, by neglecting your duty, you obſtruct the law in its courſe, and deprive your fellow ſubjects of that ſecurity and protection which every honeſt man has a right to receive from you. In ſome caſes you will be entitled to rewards; and your neceſſary expences, within certain reſtrictions, will be repaid you by the pariſh, the county, or the parties.

We approve of the above Instructions.

(SIGNED)

HAWKE,	F. F. FOLJAMBE,	W. WOOD,
B. FRANK,	J. WILSON,	J. DIXON,
M. A. TAYLOR,	B. BROOKSBANK,	C. MELLISH,
B. COOKE,	J. SMYTH,	T. B. BAYLEY.
J. STOVIN,	A. NEWMAN,	

WAKEFIELD ADJOURNED SESSIONS, EIGHTH SEPTEMBER, 1796.

PRESENT,

B. FRANK, J. SMYTH, ESQUIRES; J. DIXON, W. WOOD, CLERKS.

ORDERED, That the above Inſtructions to Conſtables, (produced by Mr. FRANK,) be printed and ſent annually to the Chief Conſtables, and be by them alſo diſtributed among their reſpective Petty Conſtables.

JOHN FOLJAMBE,

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE PEACE.

E. Waller, Printer, Northgate, Wakefield.

Med. Hist.
WZ
260
fG 7845i
1796